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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

COMMITTEE ON RULES
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
REGIONAL WHIP

November 2, 2022

The Honorable Charlotte Burrows
Chair
U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
(EEOC)
131 M Street, NE
Washington, DC 20507

Ms. Rosa Viramontes, Director
U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
(EEOC)
Los Angeles District Office, Roybal Federal Building
255 East Temple St., 4th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Chair Burrows and Director Viramontes:

Thank you for your tireless work to address issues of discrimination in workplaces across the country. In light of recent reports regarding racially charged discrimination in my district, I write to invite the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to conduct further outreach events with me, so as to do everything in its power to ensure workers in the Inland Empire know their rights, are able to access EEOC help, and are able to work in environments free from discrimination and harassment.

In 2019, the EEOC filed a lawsuit alleging that Black workers assigned by a staffing agency, Apple One, to a Cardinal Health facility in Ontario, California, experienced harassment based on their race. The lawsuit alleged that both Cardinal Health and Apple One failed to address persistent hostile behavior at the workplace that included co-workers, supervisors, and managers using degrading and derogatory racially charged language against Black workers.

In one account, one of the workers described being physically harmed and called racial slurs in both English and Spanish. When workers decided to report the abuse, they were eventually fired in retaliation.

This blatant racism has no place in the workplace and has been deeply troubling to me. Workers should be treated as human beings and given a fair shot to succeed in their employment. Moreover, we should ensure that our workers know where to go when a problem arises. In a similar case, one worker complained to the EEOC about discriminatory conduct at their warehouse facility, then within one month 115 additional complaints were made. Clearly, this indicates a lot of concern among workers, but a lack of knowledge of how, and where, to come forward with a workplace complaint.

As you know, as part of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended, EEOC is authorized to initiate its own enforcement litigation on discrimination cases. The Commission is also responsible for investigating allegations of discrimination in the workplace, providing guidance to employers, and has the power to seek compensatory or punitive damages for violation of Title VII. I am pleased to see the Commission thoroughly investigate and work to rectify this case by awarding compensation to affected workers and directing anti-harassment training programs to help prevent future incidents from ever happening again.

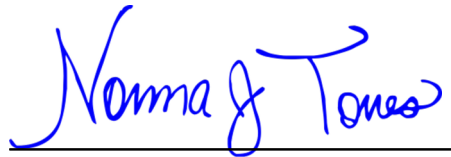
However, the issue of racial bias in the workplace is not new and there are numerous cases reported across the Southern California region and the country. Over the last decade, the Commission has successfully litigated discrimination in 171 cases involving Black workers, 59 involving Latino workers, and 12 involving Asian

workers. I am concerned with the persistent systemic racism documented in different settings across the country and how this has a larger impact on the safety and security of workers. I am also concerned with unreported or unseen cases of workplace discrimination that may be due to the lack of resources and the availability of outreach and educational programs for workers, especially access to resources for Limited English Proficiency individuals.

I urge the Commission to continue with outreach efforts to better inform workers of the available resources at the EEOC and how they can best use the power of your office in workplace discrimination and harassment situations. Specifically, I would like to request that the EEOC work with my office to organize outreach events in my district in the coming months to better inform my constituents of the work the EEOC conducts and the available resources to them on matters of workplace discrimination and harassment.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I look forward to working with your office in the coming months.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Norma J. Torres". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first name "Norma" is written with a large, stylized 'N' and 'J' is written as a small 'i'. The last name "Torres" is written with a large 'T' and a stylized 's' at the end.

Norma J. Torres
Member of Congress